

December 30, 2009



## REVIEW OF 2009 PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY

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Another year is coming to a close, which has prompted us to look back at the accomplishments of the planning department during the past 12 months. It has been a very busy year filled with a wide variety of projects. Below are the highlights for Pullman planning activity in 2009.

- \* The City Council adopted the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan on November 17, completing a process initiated back in 2007 with the production of the College Hill Neighborhood Study by planning consultant Studio Cascade, Inc. of Spokane. The draft plan was released by staff in August of this year following a review of all pertinent input, including Planning Commission stakeholder workshops in February. The Commission held seven public meetings on the draft plan in September and October, and recommended approval of the plan on October 28. The Council conducted a public input session regarding the draft plan on November 5, and adopted the plan at its next meeting.
- \* Planning staff assisted in processing 588 building permits with a valuation of \$28.9 million, including permits for the Wal-Mart Supercenter on Bishop Boulevard, the Whitman County Humane Society animal shelter on Old Moscow Road, and the Community Action Center transitional housing complex on Davis Way. Staff reviewed permits for 46 single family houses, 15 apartment units, and four manufactured homes.
- \* The Planning Commission continued

its work on reevaluating the city's urban growth area to provide for the future expansion of the community. The Commission held a public forum regarding this matter in April, and it conducted a discussion in July about refining the proposed urban growth area based on the input obtained at the forum.

- \* The planning department addressed zoning designations for two properties at the outskirts of the city during 2009. In February and March, the Commission held a public hearing on a proposal to assign an R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential designation for a 35.8-acre parcel on Johnson Avenue south of the Village Centre Cinemas; based on public input, the Commission decided to recommend an R1 Single Family Residential classification instead, and the City Council formally adopted the R1 zone for this parcel in April. In September and October, the Commission conducted a public hearing regarding a request to assign various "pre-zone" designations (R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential, I1 Light Industrial, and C3 General Commercial) for a 515-acre tract of land located outside the city limits that is bordered generally by NW Terre View Drive, State Route 27, Albion Road, and Brayton Road; after receiving public comment, the Commission recommended in favor of the proposal, with the exception that the R2 portion be assigned an R1 designation instead; the proposal will be reviewed by the Council early in 2010.

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- \* The Planning Commission entertained a proposal by the League of Women Voters to require real estate developers to hold a neighborhood meeting on major projects before submitting formal applications to the city. The Commission conducted a public forum regarding this matter in April, and discussed the proposal in detail at its June meeting. In the end, the Commission concluded that these pre-application meetings should be voluntary rather than mandatory.
  - \* Planning staff participated in various programs to prepare for the upcoming Census count on April 1, 2010. Staff helped identify a full set of residential addresses within the city through the "Local Update of Census Addresses" and "New Construction" programs, and provided information to the Census Bureau on homelessness by means of the "Targeted Nonsheltered Outdoor Location" program.
  - \* Planning staff prepared its annual population estimate in April by collecting and reviewing housing construction data and related information. The Pullman population estimate for 2009 is 27,600 (this figure includes WSU students living in town).
  - \* Planning staff administered the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which involves the formulation of a schedule for the financing of major public improvements in the city over the coming six-year period. Such things as water standpipes, park structures, and public safety equipment are funded through this mechanism. The process concluded this year with City Council adoption of the 2010-2015 CIP in July. The total amount of capital expenditures approved for 2010 is \$10.1 million, with \$109,098 of this sum to be dispensed from the general fund.
  - \* In addition to the activity listed above, the department processed a number of other applications, including one annexation (regarding 2.5 acres of land north of the airport to provide space for an airport fire suppression water reservoir), one conditional use permit (pertaining to a 140-foot-tall communications tower for the Whitcom facility on Hopkins Court), ten short plats (defined as subdivisions with four or fewer lots), six boundary line adjustments, nine environmental checklists (required by the State Environmental Policy Act), nine site plans (for proposed real estate developments), four administrative variances, two conditional use expansions, two street dedications, and one street vacation.
- The planning department wishes to extend its thanks to those community members who provided input and other assistance with respect to the projects cited above. All decisions in these public processes were improved because of your involvement.



In 2009, the Planning Commission continued its work on potentially expanding the city's urban growth area.

## WETLAND MITIGATION BANKING APPROVED IN WASHINGTON

In September of this year, the Washington State Legislature adopted a new law that allows for wetland mitigation banking. This concept was approved as a useful environmental protection tool after a five-year pilot program, with oversight provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE). The new statute is the culmination of an 11-year process, initiated by the Legislature and undertaken by DOE, to improve the success rate of compensation for wetland impacts.

Wetland mitigation banking works by allowing developers, with approval from appropriate local, state, tribal, and sometimes federal agencies, to create or enhance wetlands in advance of proposed development to build up “mitigation credits.” These credits can then be utilized to compensate for unavoidable wetland impacts associated with subsequent development proposals. For example, an owner of property containing a wetland could create additional wetland area through appropriate grading and planting of vegetation; obtain credits for this work; and then sell, trade, or give those credits to developers to offset the effects their projects have on sensitive habitat areas.

Why is mitigation banking such an effective mitigation mechanism? According to DOE, wetland banks have a greater likelihood of success since the banks must be up and running before a wetland can be disturbed, they reduce “temporal losses” caused by the lag time

between impacts to wetland functions and compensation for those impacts, and they offer greater opportunities to be designed in accordance with local watershed enhancement priorities. These wetland bank sites consolidate conservation efforts, making the wetland easier to maintain. Larger wetlands are also more sustainable and function better than smaller habitats. And, since the credits are purchased from an existing site, wetland banking can help expedite the permitting process as well.

Developers wishing to use a mitigation bank must have their plan certified through a multi-step process. The first required action for the developer is to submit a project prospectus to DOE. Once the prospectus has been determined to be complete, an Interagency Review Team (IRT) is convened to review the proposal. This IRT is assembled by DOE and may contain representatives from local, state, tribal, and federal resource agencies. The IRT provides technical feedback on the proposal’s design and performance standards and determines the number of credits that will be granted. The developer next submits a draft Mitigation Bank Instrument (MBI) to the IRT. The IRT returns comments on the draft MBI, which are incorporated into a final MBI by the developer. Once DOE, the local jurisdiction, and the developer approve the final MBI, the certification process is complete.



Further information regarding wetland banking can be obtained at:

[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/mitigation/banking](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/mitigation/banking)

or by contacting DOE wetland banking operations specialist Yolanda Holder by phone at 360-407-7186 or by email at [yhol461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:yhol461@ecy.wa.gov).





## Pending Land Use Proposals

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

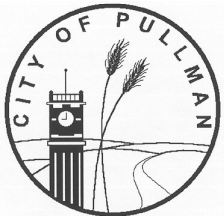
PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Certified Local Government Program	establish historic preservation program for community	citywide	CC requested ordinance revisions on 1/20; ad hoc committee met on 2/9 to address ordinance revisions; legal staff reviewing draft ordinance amendments
Hinrichs Annexation	annex 37 acres to the city	west of Sunnyside Park and north of SW Old Wawawai Road	staff reviewing revised legal description of property
Mader Land Prezone Proposal	prezone 433 acres as R2, 67 acres as I1, and 15 acres as C3	outside city limits; west of SR 27, east of Brayton Road, both sides of Albion Road	PC made recommendation on proposal 10/7; 1st of 2 CC hearings scheduled for 1/12
College Hill Core Neighborhood Draft Plan	establish and implement neighborhood plan for College Hill Core area	area surrounded by Stadium Way, Grand Avenue, Main Street, except WSU campus	CC adopted plan 11/17; staff preparing implementation schedule for plan
Whispering Hills No. 5 Planned Residential Development (PRD) Final Plan	establishment of 17 lots on 2.2 acres in a PRD	south of Old Wawawai Road and west of Sunnyside Park	staff reviewing application, and awaiting additional application materials
West Street Vacation	vacate east half of a portion of West Street	west of Douglas Drive/Darrow Street intersection	staff reviewing request; PC review tentatively scheduled for 1/27
Sacred Heart Church Canopy Variance (V-09-1)	construct canopy on church building to project into rear yard setback area	400 NE Ash Street	BOA hearing scheduled for 1/11
Sacred Heart Church Canopy Conditional Use Expansion Request (09-3)	construct 110-sq-ft canopy over rear entryway of church building	400 NE Ash Street	staff reviewing proposal
Itani Valley Road Apartments site plan (09-1)	construct 16-unit apartment building on 27,000-sq-ft lot	1245 NE Valley Road	staff requested applicant to revise site plan

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS: R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; DOE: State Department of Ecology; LC: Landmarks Commission

NOTES: 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list.. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.





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